

## Private plan strategies for managing the use of imaging services

**ISSUE:** In response to concerns about rapid growth in the volume of imaging services received by Medicare beneficiaries, MedPAC has explored strategies used by private plans to manage the use and quality of these services. In our June 2004 report to the Congress, we discussed several approaches used by private plans to control growth in the use of imaging studies while ensuring access to appropriate care. Recent work has focused on how effective these strategies have been when used by private plans. Future work will address how desirable and feasible it would be for fee-for-service Medicare to implement these approaches.

**KEY POINTS:** We will summarize the lessons we learned from private plans about the following approaches to manage the use of imaging services:

- setting safety and quality standards for imaging equipment and facilities;
- using privileging programs, which restrict the types of studies that can be performed by certain physician specialties;
- implementing coding edits, which are rules used during claim review to detect improper billing codes or adjust payment for multiple procedures on the same claim;
- developing ways to improve physicians' compliance with clinical guidelines;
- creating tiered networks of imaging providers; and
- educating patients about the appropriate use of imaging services.

**ACTION:** We would appreciate feedback from the Commission on which approaches it would like to pursue.

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